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ABSTRACT

This guide outlines guidance and counseling services in adult basic education (ABE) while providing a structure on which to conduct counselor inservice training. Relationships with ABE teachers and administrators are considered first. Also covered are implementation of the curriculum, functions of the New York State Employment Service, ABE counselor relations with community and welfare agencies, ABE guidance and counseling goals, characteristics of disadvantaged adults, student orientation and other program services, and the process of program evaluation. Two bibliographies and a subject index are furnished. (LY)

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A GUIDE FOR ADULT EDUCATION COUNSELORS

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FOREWORD

Counseling and Guidance in Adult Basic Education Programs

Much of the material presented in this bulletin is based on a recent guide, INSERVICE TRAINING COURSE FOR GUIDANCE STAFF OF MDTA* CLASSES, prepared by the Bureau of Continuing Education Curriculum Development, under the aegis of the Bureau of Manpower Development and the Bureau of Guidance, State Education Department. Thanks are due these units for use of the contents of the MDTA guide.

Thanks are also extended to the following persons who volunteered to review and revise the original contents to relate them more closely to adult basic education service: Evelyn D. Wolfe, Adult Basic Education Counselor, White Plains; Dorothea McMillen, Adult Basic Education Counselor, Albany; Judy G. Moser, Welfare Education Program Counselor, New York City; John Petrillo, Adult Basic Education Counselor, Yonkers.

The following Adult Basic Education Administrators contributed recommendations from the administrative viewpoint: Gerardo Franciosa, Niagara Falls; William Jacques, Syracuse; Elliot Lethbridge, White Plains; Donald Montano, Utica; Harrison G. Otis, Hewlett-Woodmere (Retired); and Robert Wilmot, Auburn. Coordination and supervision were provided by Joseph Mangano, Chief, Bureau of General Continuing Education; and Burton Thelander, Supervisor, Bureau of Guidance, State Education Department. Richard W. Weiner, former member of Bureau of Guidance, prepared the first draft of this bulletin.

Monroe C. Neff, Director
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*Manpower Development and Training Act

PURPOSE

This guide is intended to serve a dual purpose: It presents broad dimensions of guidance and counseling services in adult basic education and it provides a structure on which to build inservice training experiences for counselors. While it provides an ideal framework, the realities of educational life have not been lost to sight.

Consequently, users of this guide would take into account any limitations imposed by funds, staffing, time, or student characteristics and modify and adapt their guidance and counseling services and inservice training activities to those limitations.

This guide is also intended to help administrators, teachers, and counselors set long-range objectives and short-term goals.

Philip B. Langworthy
Associate Commissioner
for Instructional Services

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The ABE Setting

I. THE COUNSELOR IN THE ABE SETTING

The new counselor in an ABE program faces the difficult task of comprehending his role in relation to a network of personnel. The ultimate goal is one of teamwork, cooperation, and coordination. The precise nature of this interaction with respect to teachers, supervisors, specialists, and teachers-in-charge is often defined within the individual ABE facility.

One common contribution, however, can be made by all counselors - the art of effective communication. More than any other member of the ABE staff, the counselor is in a position to become aware of the students' personal, social, educational, and vocational needs. The manner in which he functions and presents feedback can influence the attitudes of teachers, supervisors, and administrators.

A. The ABE Team

The ABE team includes counselors, teachers, supervisors, and administrators. Following are some suggested approaches to teamwork which may assist the counselor to function within the framework of the total ABE facility.

1. Counselor-Teacher Relationships

a. Objective: To develop teacher-counselor avenues of communication relative to students.

b. Concept: The climate of learning is influenced by teacher-student relationships.

c. Topics:

(1) The psychological implications of student classroom behavioral problems

(a) Avoidance patterns and fear of failure

(b) Lack of participation

(c) Negative reactions to test situations; blocking

(d) Inappropriate responses to verbal and written material

(2) The need for supportive behavior by teachers

d. Suggested Activities for Participants:

(1) Role play a teacher-counselor conference.

(2) Role play a three-way conference: teacher-student-counselor.

(3) Observe a teacher workshop.

(4) Conduct a planning session: developing goals for a teacher workshop.

(5) Set up a conference with teachers; e.g., show a film, invite a speaker, etc.

(6) Observe a case conference.

(7) Plan a case conference with teachers and administrators.

(8) Suggested activity for long-term supervision and inservice training: develop a teacher workshop.

2. Counselor-Administrator Relationships

a. Objective: To develop counselor awareness of channels of communication with administrative staff members.

b. Concepts:

(1) The counselor can be more effective if he understands his role within the total organization.

(2) The administrator can be more effective in staff development through a clearer understanding of teacher, student, and counselor needs.

c. Topics:

(1) Clarification of roles

(2) Understanding of the organizational structure

(3) Sharing information

(4) Program development

(5) Establishing recognized channels of communication

d. Suggested Activities for the Participant:

(1) Set up a counselor-administrator conference.

(2) Plan a teacher workshop with an administrator.

(3) Observe the administrator in his job.

(4) Participate in a buzz session and discussion: how the counselor relates to various members of the organization.

(5) Tour other ABE or MDT facilities.

(6) Pursue long-term activities, such as development of counselor-administrator conferences.

B. The ABE Curriculum

The educational challenge is only part of the ABE student's reality. The counselor must understand the content and process of

the ABE program if he is to offer students meaningful guidance and counseling.

1. Objectives: To facilitate counselor understanding of the educational experience of the student.

2. Concept: The counselor understands that curriculum is related to the immediate needs and aspirations of the student.

3. Topics:

   a. Scope of curriculum

   b. Using test results

   c. On-the-job training

   d. Relating class experiences to changing family-life patterns

4. Suggested Activities for Participants:

   a. Audit a class.

   b. Follow a student's schedule for an entire session.

   c. Participate in buzz sessions relative to the counselor's own feelings about new learning situations he faces.

   d. Play the role of a new student entering a program.

   e. Accompany students on a field trip to a work site.

   f. Study curriculum content and syllabi.

   g. Pursue long-term activities, such as exchange visits to other ABE or MDT centers, followed by post-visit evaluation.

   h. Participate in group guidance sessions with counselors to examine their feelings about implementing ABE curriculum.

C. New York State Employment Service

This section deals with services and functions of the Employment Service relative to the ABE facility.

1. Objectives:

   a. To develop counselor understanding of the New York State Employment Service and to seek a close working relationship between himself and NYSES personnel.

b. To facilitate candidate referrals from the New York State Employment Service office to the ABE facility, and to get NYSES assistance for graduates and premature program leavers.

c. To become sensitized to the employers' expectations and to relate these facts to the counselee.

2. Concepts:

a. The Department of Labor is heavily involved in rendering service to the MDT program and its trainees. It can offer service to the ABE program.

b. Teamwork is necessary to help students improve their economic position through work.

c. Counselor understanding of the recruitment and placement processes relative to the program helps in better service to ABE students.

d. A productive counseling relationship is facilitated if the counselor is aware of the student's referral experiences immediately prior to the student's first day in the ABE program.

3. Topics:

a. NYSES involvement in recruiting and placing MDT trainees

b. NYSES services available to ABE students, graduates, and premature program leavers

c. Vocational counseling

d. Job placement through NYSES, other agencies, and direct contact with employers

e. Follow-up and evaluation of job placement

4. Suggested Activities for Participants:

a. Accompany an outpost worker from NYSES as he makes a recruitment contact.

b. Follow an MDT applicant as he is processed through the Employment Service. Ask questions of the receptionist, interviewer, counselor, tester, placement officer, and claims approval official.

c. In conjunction with the Employment Service counselor, take part in a trainee group discussion session involving the world of work.

d. Audit a job order being solicited or taken and a job referral being made by the NYSES official via telephone.

e. Accompany NYSES personnel as they call on employers.

D. Community and Welfare Agencies

A large segment of the ABE student population receives public and private assistance. This requires the counselor to be involved directly with community and welfare agencies serving his students.

1. Objectives:

a. To understand that the counselor's work should supplement and coordinate with counseling services provided by community and welfare agencies.

b. To establish mutual referral lines and routines with community and welfare agency personnel.

c. To help students to move successfully from assistance status to job tenure.

d. To develop an understanding of the processes employed by community and welfare agencies in providing relief and assistance to families.

2. Concept: The helping role extends beyond the ABE facility. Part of the counselor's role is to develop lines of referral and communication between counselor and agency.

3. Topics:

a. Agency:

(1) Functions

(2) Services

(3) Location

(4) Liaison personnel

(5) ABE-welfare agency communication and coordination

b. ABE-Agency Relations

(1) Cross-referral procedures and routines

(2) Communications

3. Suggested Activities for Participants:

a. Meet with community and welfare agency personnel at their agencies to discuss issues of mutual concern.

b. Accompany a caseworker on his rounds.

c. Role play the referral process.

d. Explain the role and function of the ABE counselor to community and welfare agency personnel.

e. Invite a former assistance recipient to discuss with ABE, community, and welfare agency personnel problems related to successful employment.

f. Explore helping agencies in the community.

g. Invite a health agency to address counselors on community health problems relative to the community and to individuals.

h. Invite a legal aid society or housing agency representative to visit the ABE counseling staff.

i. Develop a file of referral sources and routine procedures for each agency.

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II. THE COUNSELOR IN THE ABE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

The ABE counselor functions within a system which is expressed through its program. This guidance and counseling system operates within the local ABE environment. The ABE environment, in turn, is a system functioning within a community environment. Progressively, the system-environment-system articulation moves through area, state, and region to the national level.

Of immediate concern to the counselor is his own system - guidance and counseling - and that system's environment - the ABE facility.

This section provides a framework to focus on the system component of the "system-environment" construct. Ideally, the guidance and counseling system expresses a program designed to achieve goals in terms of student needs. The following outline deals first with program goals and subsequently with those interrelated services which comprise the program itself. Suggested activities for Part A following are listed at the end of that part inasmuch as purposes interlock.

The ABE Guidance and Counseling Program

A. Goals of the Guidance and Counseling Program

1. Objectives:

a. To develop the counselor's ability to relate his services to ABE program goals.

b. To develop the counselor's awareness of the students' educational, vocational, and personal social needs.

c. To sensitize the counselor to identify the elements of the guidance and counseling program which can most effectively meet these needs.

d. To develop counselor understanding of the long-range and short-range goals to achieve desired behavioral changes.

2. Helping to meet educational needs of students:

a. Concepts:

(1) The counselor has many roles in the instructional program.

(2) The counselor is a contributor to curriculum evaluation and development.

b. Topics:

(1) Conducting group guidance activities relative to student study skills

(2) Assisting teachers to locate and obtain occupationally, socially, or economic-related materials for use in class

(3) Providing concurrent and follow-up data about students and their experiences for the curriculum evaluation and development processes

(4) Integrating guidance and counseling services toward meeting students' educational needs

3. Helping to meet vocational needs of students:

a. Concepts:

(1) The counselor is the lead staff member in providing students with labor market and occupational information.

(2) Considerable counselor time and effort should be expended to assure, where appropriate, that education results in successful job entry and progress.

b. Topics:

(1) Providing students with information about the labor market and specific occupations

(2) Helping students to understand and accept personal requirements, attitudes, and behavior necessary for successful post-training work experience and career development

(3) Working with New York State Employment Service counselors to assist graduates to make initial adjustments and solve problems relative to jobs

4. Helping to meet personal social needs of students:

a. Concepts:

(1) Personal and social characteristics are as important variables in employment stability as vocational skills.

(2) Prudent personal and family management are as necessary to lifting one's self out of poverty as possession of a worthwhile job.

b. Topics:

(1) Working with students to translate their new concepts of self into positive behavioral and attitudinal outcomes

(2) Teaching students wise consumership, and personal and family management

(3) Teaching students skills in solving personal, family, social, and occupational problems

(4) Referral to community agencies

c. Suggested Activities for Participants

(1) Meet with NYSES counselors to discuss current labor market conditions and trends; specific occupational opportunities.

(2) Meet with reading supervisor or consultant to discuss study skill needs of students.

(3) Observe a counselor-teacher conference regarding a student's progress.

(4) Make several home visits and discuss experiences with other counselors.

(5) Plan a follow-up study.

(6) Read several case studies and decide which community agencies should receive referrals.

(7) Review and suggest revisions to the occupational information library.

(8) Visit a former student at home or on the job to discuss changes in his self-perception.

5. Helping meet needs of disadvantaged persons:

I. Educational Characteristics

a. Objectives:

(1) To develop counselor awareness of the academic aspiration level of the disadvantaged student population.

(2) To develop counselor understanding that the length of time the student has spent in formal schooling may not be indicative of learning, achievement, potential, nor attitude.

b. Concepts:

(1) Many disadvantaged students have had inferior educational opportunities and thus either left the system which bred failure or else remained in school, but received little reward for their efforts.

(2) Standardized test results based on children's norms may be inadequate as indices of trainee ability. New adult tests may provide better bases for evaluation and prediction.

c. Topics:

(1) Quantity, quality, and recency of educational experience

(2) Reactions to and performance on tests

(3) Reasons for early school leaving

II. Psychological Characteristics

a. Objectives:

(1) The counselor gains understanding to help him to develop frames of reference relative to counselees' perceptions.

(2) The counselor relates to his work trends of thought held by social and political forces, including neighborhood, civil rights, and community action groups.

b. Concepts:

(1) Factors are at play which cause the values and attitudes of disadvantaged persons to be contrary to popularly accepted standards.

(2) There is much myth associated with that segment of our population identified as disadvantaged.

c. Topics:

(1) Self-image

(2) Lack of goal-setting tendencies

(3) Attitudes toward governmental agencies and functions

(4) Reactions to ethnic group classification

III. Economic Characteristics

a. Objective:

(1) The counselor has at least an empathic understanding of the economic meaning of poverty to the individual.

b. Concepts:

(1) There are formidable barriers to breaking the poverty cycle.

(2) Poor persons tend to receive less in goods and services for their expenditures than do persons in better economic circumstances.

(3) Housing is generally limited in type, location, and condition; it is more expensive and is maintained at a lower standard than similar housing in non-deprived areas.

c. Topics:

(1) Personal and family history of employment

(2) Unemployment

(a) Extent

(b) Reasons

(c) Ramifications

(3) History of and attitude toward public assistance

(4) Consumer habits of the poor

(5) Economic dilemmas; postponement of immediate needs gratification in favor of long-range planning toward larger goals

IV. Sociological Characteristics

a. Objectives:

(1) The counselor understands the sociological aspect of disadvantagement.

(2) The counselor understands the disadvantaged person's self-classification in relation to society and his social classification by other members of society.

b. Concepts:

(1) Groups are not really homogeneous in terms of all human variables.

(2) Although one should be knowledgeable about the theories of sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines dealing with man, he must guard against a clinical approach to individuals.

c. Topics:

(1) Ethnic membership

(2) Family structure

(3) The concomitants of geographic disadvantagement

(4) Community action in a nation of change

(5) Patterns of individual and group behavior

d. Activities for Participants:

(1) Participate in a group discussion of issues and situations reported in the leading local newspaper. To allow freedom of opinion, this group might not be composed of ABE students but persons served by another agency; for example, the Job Corps or Neighborhood Youth Corps. The participants should be of the same socio-economic classification as the ABE enrollees.

(2) Review the results of achievement and aptitude tests administered in the ABE facility, followed by a discussion about the implications of these findings.

(3) Plan a family budget based on the case study of a former ABE student.

(4) Visit the schools and the communities from which the students come.

(5) Observe and conduct administration of an achievement or aptitude test.

(6) Observe and conduct a test interpretation session, including an item analysis.

(7) Sit in a regular class session.

(8) From cumulative record information, present a blind case to the counselor. Have him describe the subject's field of experiences and influences, his reasons for certain behaviors, his outlook on the world. Subsequently, arrange a counseling interview with the subject of the case. Compare the counselor's pre-interview perceptions and his post-interview perceptions about the case.

(9) Discuss absenteeism with the facility's attendance person; its causes and the methods of handling this problem.

(10) Discuss the labels "disadvantaged" and "culturally deprived" with an experienced counselor.

(11) Visit students in their homes.

e. Resources:

The past may explain the future. The present becomes the cornerstone for change. It is realized through man's efforts to understand the evolution of his experiences, his conditions, and his feelings. How does this relate to the ABE counselor guiding the disadvantaged student?

Effective counseling of the disadvantaged must deal with problems in the daily environment. The counselor must help the student focus on behavioral changes which will help him realize his "untapped potential." The counselor should explore such meaningful questions with the student as:

"If I fail, what should I do?"

"Who should I go to for help?"

"What kind of job do I want?"

"What personal traits can I capitalize on to make me the most effective person I can become?"

The effective ABE counselor is behaviorally-oriented. He, therefore, helps the disadvantaged student focus on present behaviors: his present life-style, his present occupation, his present educational, financial, and social status.

The counselee is encouraged to vigorously "work on himself" in an effort to change his behavior. The goal - to guide the disadvantaged person "to become all he is capable of being."

B. The Guidance and Counseling Program

1. Counseling Service

a. Individual Counseling

(1) Objective: To develop counseling skill to assist the student to make optimum modifications in his behavior to maximize his personal gain.

(2) Concepts:

(a) Counseling should be consonant with the ABE student-centered approach to modifying behavior.

(b) Every student should be counseled as extensively as required.

(3) Topics:

(a) Special problems in gaining counseling rapport

(b) Initiating and maintaining a counseling relationship

(c) Assisting teachers to improve their student interviewing and consultative techniques

(d) Counseling follow-up

(e) Encouraging self-referrals by students

(f) Supervision of counseling

(4) Suggested Activities for Participants:

(a) Audio-tape counseling sessions and critique them with the supervisor and other counselors. Ethically, this may only be done with the counselee's permission.

(b) Discuss counseling theory in relation to counseling ABE students.

(c) Video-tape counseling sessions using the instant playback method for evaluation. This may be carried out either in a role play or live counseling interview. A follow-up discussion may relate to key points in the interview.

(d) Through a two-way vision mirror, observe an ABE counselor who is experienced in interviewing, tape record these sessions, and discuss the process of the interview.

b. Group Counseling and Guidance

(1) Objective: To help the counselor to develop skills and techniques for use in group process.

(2) Concepts:

(a) Group counseling permits students to have others react to tentative and model solutions of problems relative to present and near-future needs.

(b) Group guidance activities are an efficient way to provide students with information, experiences, and certain understandings which cannot be effectively conveyed in individual counseling.

(3) Topics:

(a) Special problems in gaining rapport

(b) Establishing and maintaining groups

(c) Working with teachers in class presentations

(d) Organizing and conducting group activities, such as field trips and projects

(e) Individual counseling as follow-up of group counseling and guidance

(f) Viable topics for group guidance activities

(g) Materials and resources for group guidance activities

(4) Suggested Activity for Participants:

(a) Observe a counselor experienced in ABE as he conducts group counseling and group guidance activities.

2. Orientation Service

A number of ABE students have the aptitude for, and can benefit from, education beyond the ABE limits: evening high school, high school equivalency, vocational training, Manpower Development and Training Program.

(1) Topics:

(a) Orientation practices

(b) Staff responsibilities

(2) Suggested Activities for Participants:

(a) Participate as a student in orientation activities.

(b) Role play the initial interview with the admitting office.

(c) Plan one of the orientation activities.

(d) Discuss with a group of students their feelings about the effectiveness of the orientation service.

(e) Develop a plan for evaluating orientation activities.

(f) Meet with representatives of educational and training facilities to establish referral guidelines and admissions procedures between the ABE program and these facilities.

(f) Set up a file of catalogs, brochures, application forms, and other information related to further educational training.

3. Individual Inventory Service

(1) Objective: To familiarize the counselor with the contents of the individual inventory; to teach him how to maintain the inventory and use it to further the welfare of the student.

(2) Concepts:

(a) The individual inventory is the source of much information which can make contributions toward student advancement and toward program development.

(b) The individual inventory is part of the total record which includes teachers' cumulative records and administrative records.

(c) Counselors have the responsibility to safeguard the confidentiality of inventory files.

(3) Topics:

(a) Contents of the individual inventory

(b) Counselor and other staff members' responsibility for maintenance.

(c) Using the individual inventory in conjunction with other records.

(4) Suggested Activities for Participants:

(a) Interpret his inventory to a student under observation of the supervisor and follow-up with a discussion.

(b) Discuss with other counselors the potential use of each item included in the inventory system.

(c) From raw data, fill in an individual inventory for a hypothetical student.

(d) Interpret a student's inventory to a teacher.

(e) Have a teacher interpret his cumulative record to the counselor.

(f) Discuss use of administrative records with the coordinator.

4. Student Appraisal Service

(1) Objectives:

(a) To develop the counselor's knowledge of instruments for appraisal and their purposes to evaluate student status and progress.

(b) To develop the counselor's ability to administer tests, and to interpret the results.

(2) Concepts:

(a) Students, because of earlier experiences, may be test-shy.

(b) Test administration procedures must be adapted to reduce student fear and tension which may accompany the testing experience.

(3) Topics:

(a) Instruments used to appraise students

(b) Interpreting and using test results

(c) Administrative procedures in testing

(d) Evaluation of the appraisal program

(4) Suggested Activities for Participants:

(a) Take each test in the appraisal program

(b) Interpret test results to a student and his teacher. Discuss the student's reaction to the experience with the student.

(c) Administer a test to a student group and follow up with a discussion of their reactions.

C. Evaluation of the Guidance and Counseling Program

1. Objectives:

a. To develop the counselor's understanding of the dimensions of evaluation.

b. To develop the counselor's ability to participate in designing and implementing evaluative procedures and to analyze the results in terms of conclusions and recommendations.

2. Concepts:

a. The results of evaluation provide the bases from which the guidance and counseling program may be extended and improved.

b. The results of evaluation are useful to other aspects of the ABE program; such as curriculum development, administrative procedure, and teacher and counselor inservice training.

3. Topics:

a. Purposes of evaluation

b. Objectives of the guidance and counseling program

c. Defining evaluative criteria based on objectives

d. Methodology for applying criteria

(1) Survey Methodology

(a) Follow-up of former students, including direct interviews.

(b) Opinion survey: present students, faculty, administrators, community resource personnel, Employment Service, counselors, employers.

(c) Survey team: ABE counselors and the Bureau of Guidance field staff.

(2) Experimental Methodology

(a) Evaluate specific guidance and counseling activities, using an experimental group and a control group of students.

(b) Compare two or more techniques designed to reach an objective by comparing results of implementing the techniques among comparable student groups.

e. Report the results of evaluation

f. Follow up the results of evaluation through implementation of accepted recommendations

(3) Case Study Methodology

(a) Select student cases to represent program processes.

(b) Measure processes against program objectives.

(c) Reexamine objectives and modify as required.

(d) Modify, and plan, new activities and procedures in terms of objectives.

4. Suggested Activities for Participants:

a. Design a follow-up study or opinion survey.

b. State the objectives of a specific service and define evaluative criteria.

c. Design an evaluative experiment in cooperation with teaching staff members.

d. Review reference and resource materials.

e. Discuss evaluation with a counselor educator.

f. Plan a team survey.

D. Resources

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